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News from

Congressman Robert A. Underwood



2418 Rayburn House Office Building

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Summer 2000

Pacific Islander Issues Taken Up With Interagency Working Group And White House Advisory Commission On Asian Americans And Pacific Islanders

On May 9, Congressman Underwood gave an overview of U.S. Pacific Islander issues to the Interagency Working Group established under the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at the U.S. Department of Interior. He also spoke to the White House Initiative's 15-Member Advisory Commission on May 17.

The presentation highlighted the difficulties that federal policymakers face in coordinating policies toward Pacific Islanders because no other minority population is dispersed in as wide a geographical area. He encouraged federal policymakers to take into account the diversity of political relationships of the geographical areas, as these include states, territories, and the freely associated states. The strategic and historical importance of the Pacific to U.S. national strategy in the Asia Pacific Region

was emphasized, and greater public awareness of indigenous Pacific Islander populations under the U.S. flag (Chamorros, Native Hawaiians, and American Samoans). The patchwork treatment by the federal bureaucracy was also highlighted.

Lastly, the importance of disaggregating federal data collection on Pacific Islander populations for statistical and reporting requirements and for civil rights compliance reporting was stressed. "It is virtually impossible for federal policymakers to help Pacific Islanders without adequate data collection, particularly as it pertains to higher education, health, median income, and loan lending patterns," he said.

STUDENT GUAM DELEGATE



Congressman Underwood presents a U.S. flag to Maria Roberto (left), principal of Agat's Marcial Sablan Elementary School. Also in attendance was William B. Jones (center), a George Washington High School senior, who was selected as Guam's Student Washington Delegate during Island Youth Leadership Day, sponsored by the Government of Guam. In his role as Delegate for a day, William shadowed the Congressman in his duties to a variety of events, including the flag presentation.

Resources Committee Hears Guam Omnibus Opportunities And Guam War Restitution Bills

On April 13, the House Resources Committee held a hearing on Congressman Underwood's bills, H.R. 2462, the Guam Omnibus Opportunities Act, and H.R. 755, the Guam War Restitution Act. Witnesses included Lisa Guide, the Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, former Guam Delegate Ben Blaz, and Gerald Perez, Board Chairman of the Guam Chamber of Commerce.

Congressman Underwood was pleased with the hearing and is optimistic that he can work out any concerns over the bills prior to Congressional passage. It is hoped both measures will pass the House in July and the Senate in September.

The Guam Omnibus Opportunities Act includes provisions that deal with the return of federal excess lands to the Government of

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Former UOG President Named To Presidential Advisory Commission On Asian Americans And Pacific Islanders

At Congressman Underwood's recommendation, President Bill Clinton has named former UOG President, Wilfred P. Leon



Guerrero, to a 15-member Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The former president and founding dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Science, dean of the Land Grant Program, and associate dean of the College of Education, Dr. Leon Guerrero is a prominent and long-time advocate of education, with extensive knowledge of the Asia/Pacific Region.

President of W. P. Leon Guerrero & Associates and a past president of the Young Men's League of Guam, Dr. Leon Guerrero is currently the chairman of the UOG Endowment Foundation Board.

The Commission was established last June by Presidential Executive Order 13125 to develop, monitor, and coordinate federal efforts to improve the quality of life for

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, to increase their public, private and community involvement and participation in federal programs, and to foster research and data collection.

For more information on the commission, visit <http://www.hrsa.gov/aapi>.

Fena Memorial To Be Built Next Year

A memorial to the victims of the World War II Fena Cave massacre could be completed in time for Liberation Day 2001, if Congress approves Congressman Underwood's provision in the FY 2001 military construction budget. In addition to \$37 million package for fuel storage at Andersen A.F.B. and a child care facility at Naval Activities, the MilCon bill includes a requirement for the Defense Department to erect a memorial inside the Naval Magazine where 30 Chamorros were executed during the war.

At Your Service...

Del. Underwood Halts Shipment Of Foreign PCBs To Guam

Congressman Underwood successfully halted a Department of Defense proposal in April to send more than 200,000 pounds of PCB (polychlorinated biphenols) contaminated materials either to Guam or Johnston Island for temporary storage.

In a letter to the President, he wrote that Guam and the Pacific should not be used as a "dumping ground" for the military's chemical waste. The letter also highlighted Guam's own PCB disposal problem. In that case, the threat of legal action by environmental groups against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has hamstrung the agency's ability to permit the safe disposal of PCBs from Guam and other U.S. territories that remain outside the U.S. customs zone.

The Congressman plans to hold a task force briefing in Washington, D.C., to continue the fight for a safe and healthy environment on Guam. The Congressman has also encouraged the U.S. Navy to pay for a comprehensive health study of the Mongmong PCB problem.

Maritime Administrator Visits Guam

Mr. Clyde Hart, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administrator, visited Guam in March at Congressman Underwood's request, to see Guam's port and ship repair facility and to meet with local public and private officials involved with shipping and with military officials.

MARAD administers federal laws and programs that promote and maintain the U.S. merchant marine and the nation's shipping needs for domestic and foreign

Guam Army National Guard Breaks Ground For New Armory



After years of waiting, Guam Army National Guard Adjutant General Benny Paulino, second from right, along with visiting National Guard officials, Acting Governor Madeleine Bordallo, Speaker Tony Unpingco, and Congressman Underwood, broke ground in March for the first phase of its new Readiness Center. Funding for the Center was included in the \$103 million Military Construction Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2000.

"CHAMORRO STANDARD TIME" SOUGHT

The ninth time zone under the U.S. flag -- the one in which Guam and the Northern Marianas lie -- has no name and thus no official recognition. This fact was brought to light by John Day of the long distance carrier, Startec PCI, which is among the many entities that rely on

accurate time information.

For purposes of trade and commerce, the Atlantic, Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific, Hawaii, Alaska, and Samoa Standard Time Zones are recognized, but the ninth time zone is often ignored. To address the issue, Congressman Underwood introduced a bill last month to name it "Chamorro Standard Time."

Since "Marianas Standard Time Zone" leaves out Guam, and "Guam Standard Time Zone" leaves out the CNMI, the Congressman felt "Chamorro Standard Time" was most appropriate. The name honors the native inhabitants of the entire Mariana Islands chain.



Mr. Hart speaks before the Guam Chamber of Commerce's Armed Services Committee.

commerce, and national security. It also ensures adequate shipbuilding and repair, efficient ports, and intermodal water and land transportation systems and oversees the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Resources Committee

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Guam; equity for foreign investors in Guam; allowing husked betel nut grown in Guam into the U.S. customs zone; clarifying federal housing assistance for U.S. citizens and citizens of the Freely Associated States; empowering governors of the territories and the State of Hawaii to report to the Interior Department on the financial and social impacts of the Compacts of Free Association on their jurisdictions; and clarifying Department of Justice funding for Guam.

The Guam War Restitution Act amends the Organic Act to provide a process for restitution to Chamorros who suffered compensable injury during the Japanese occupation of Guam during World War II. For testimonies and information on the bills, visit <http://www.house.gov/underwood>.

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Working on Your Behalf...

Guam's Home Healthcare Industry Saved

At least 600 disabled seniors and bed-ridden invalids on Guam rely on home nursing services. And since nursing homes are not common in Guam, homecare service providers estimate that more may need the service but are unaware it is available or that Medicare assistance makes it affordable.

Earlier this year, instead of reaching out to those who need home care, Guam's only providers, Guam Nursing Services and Isla Home Health Services, Inc., were threatened with having to close down. That's because the rate at which they were reimbursed by Medicare was reduced from 96% to 65%. With a severe cut in the reimbursements, Guam's home health providers claimed they could not make enough to stay in business



At the Malesso Senior Citizen Center, Congressman Underwood visits with manamko, who are among the largest users of home health care and nursing services.

and were faced with cutting services.

After attempting unsuccessfully to find out why the rate was reduced, Guam Nursing Services and Isla Home Care asked Congressman Underwood for assistance.

He then met with officials from the U.S. Department of Health's Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) who agreed that the rollback was based on inaccurate information and should not have occurred.

HCFA officials ordered the reimbursement rate back to 96%, retroactive to October 1, 1999, and decided to apply a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) adjustment, which Alaska, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico enjoyed, but Guam previously did not. As a result, the reimbursement rate will get another boost.

The decision came as good news to the homecare providers, who were quick to point out that the real winners were the people of Guam who need homecare.

U.S. Department Of Labor Will Conduct New Guam Wage Survey: Good News For Raytheon Employees

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will conduct a new wage determination for Guam in the coming weeks. This will have a direct impact on the wages of the 800 or so former Navy civilian employees now working for Raytheon Technical Services. Raytheon's current salary rates are based on old wage data, because the DOL had not updated Guam's wage survey in several years. Congressman Underwood and his staff learned that DOL had newer and better Guam data, but did not calculate it into a new wage survey for service contract work. Now that data will be used for the new survey, it is expected to translate into wage increases for most Raytheon employees.

The Congressman also is calling for a hearing on A-76 before the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee before Congress adjourns for the year. A General Accounting Office audit of military outsourcing in Guam is also being planned and is being supported by the Readiness Subcommittee Chairman, Congressman Herb Bateman (R-VA), and Ranking Member, Congressman Solomon Ortiz (D-TX).



Congressman Underwood met with American Federal Government Employees Union President Manny Cruz, far right, and several affected union members to hear their concerns about the Raytheon contract that recently took effect. During this meeting the need for a Congressional hearing to halt the implementation of the Raytheon contract was discussed.

Local Businessmen Attend National Congressional Business Summit In Washington, D.C.

Bank of Guam President Anthony Leon Guerrero and Duty Free Shoppers Guam Division President Gerald Perez attended the "Partnerships for a Growing America" Congressional Business Summit on May 8 at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. More than 200 business people from around the country convened on Capitol Hill to participate in workshops and meetings designed to help improve their local economies. The purpose of the summit, which was sponsored by the Minority Leader's office, was to provide American business leaders an opportunity to express their views on how Congress can help sustain and expand the economy.

Congressman Underwood said Mr. Leon Guerrero and Mr. Perez were well versed on Guam's current economic conditions and business climate and could effectively speak to Guam's unique problems, needs and concerns.

Mr. Leon Guerrero and Mr. Perez joined other business leaders in various workshops and training sessions on such topics as childcare needs, technology training and tapping into emerging markets. Summit participants also took the opportunity to tell members of Congress and White House officials how their businesses work and what government could do to make them even better.

One of the Congressman's top priorities for the summit was to make sure Guam's businesses are adequately prepared and equipped to compete in the economy of the 21st century. Since the Internet is changing the face of commerce and economies worldwide, educating business people, employers and employees on new technology and on effective use of it are quickly becoming the keys to commercial success in today's fast-paced, ever-evolving economy.

For more on the summit, log onto <http://democraticleader.house.gov/issues/specialevents>.

Supporting Our Students...



More Flags Presented

In his continuing project to ensure that every school in Guam receives a new U.S. flag, Congressman Underwood visited Inarajan Elementary, Merizo Marytrs Elementary, and F.Q. Sanchez Elementary in Umatac in March.

In April, he visited Agat's J.P. Torres Elementary, M. Sablan Elementary, H.S. Truman Elementary, and Oceanview Middle School. All the new flags have the distinction of having been flown over the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.



Students at Merizo Elementary (above) and Inarajan Elementary (below) gather to hear about their school's new American flag.



Below: Congressman Underwood speaks to students and faculty at F.Q. Sanchez Elementary after the flag presentation about the importance of education. Bottom: F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School's welcoming display.



College Students Forum A Great Beginning

Many students who leave Guam for school find themselves disconnected from current events and the issues of importance to our island. On May 5, nine students from East Coast schools participated in Congressman Underwood's inaugural Guam College Students Issues Forum.

William Castro of Barrigada, and Julie Flores of Dededo, who attend the Teachers College at Columbia University; Frances Diaz of Barrigada, attending the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America, Adrian Dominguez of Malesso, attending George Washington University, Genevieve Fitzgerald of Mangilao, attending Boston College, Tricia Oftana of Dededo, attending the Catholic University of America, Sophia Santos of Agat, attending the University of Notre Dame, Stephen Sokol of New York, attending Columbia University, and Ramon Underwood of Yona, attending Northern Virginia Community College, spent the morning with the Congressman and Pacific Island experts from Senator Daniel Akaka's Office, the Department of Interior, and the House Resources Committee discussing

Annual Teachers Conference



Speaker Tony Unpingco (left) and Congressman Underwood, who delivered the keynote address, participate in a panel discussion at this year's Teachers Conference sponsored by the UOG Association for Childhood Education International.

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

Congressional Arts Winner



Jessica Chan, right, a Simon Sanchez High School senior, and her mother, Mrs. Wing Yu Chan, show off her winning work, "An Island Welcome," which will represent Guam in this year's Artistic Discovery display on Capitol Hill.

everything from Guam's relationship with the federal government to the difficulties Pacific Islanders in the U. S. face today. The forum also focused on indigenous rights issues, including the potential implications of the Supreme Court's recent decision on *Rice vs. Cayetano* on the upcoming Chamorro self-determination vote. The Court held that limiting state elections for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to Native Hawaiians was unconstitutional.

The students later met with the director of the Smithsonian Institution's Asian and Pacific American Studies program and a visiting scholar from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. They discussed the Smithsonian's efforts to increase funding for APA studies and the possibility of starting study groups on their own.

The Congressman hopes to make the forum an annual event. If you are a Guam student attending school in the U.S. and are interested in additional information, contact him at guamtodc@mail.house.gov.

Robert A. Underwood

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Bulk Rate
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